



## The Flash Drive.



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### Chapter 1 by Robert

The two Links are caked from head to their outsize Wellington boots in mud, most of it dry but the legs are wet with fresh stuff clinging on making every step even more tiring, flaked out from the exhaustive efforts they lay on the enormous mound of earth mud rocks and stones they'd spent the past two days excavating, second wind caught they're now sat staring silently into the extremely large hole,

"We'll have a go at opening it up now?" Grit the brains of this operation announced,

"Yes, think I got enough energy left, cannot believe it's taken so long to unearth the thing, wonder what's in it?" Dreg the bigger of the two Links answered the question with another question as he got to his feet,

"I know similar looking things have been found before and were called 'time capsules' they were buried by the humans when they owned the world,"

"Wouldn't it be good for us if it was one of those capsules and in it was more technology and the answer to what happened to them, imagine we'd be famous with riches and much acclaim,"

"Don't want the acclaim just the riches." Grit says almost bitterly,

"Yeah I'll go for that, we wouldn't have no trouble attracting some of those girls down at the barn then,"

"There's nothing on this farm or in this town for us, everyone wants out, cash in the pocket and a bank account with money in, it'll be a bloody barren farm how many more years can we keep it up?" Dreg says, "I'll go show for our efforts except malnutrition and w..."

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cities the humans built and I bet you it wouldn't take much to persuade some of those gals to join us,"

"Cool, lets get on and do this."

The rungs on the ladder though slippery didn't hold any surprises as they each took their turn at descending into the dark and much cooler pit, a welcome respite from the scorching simmer sun and the heat, now ankle deep in wet, sticky mud Dreg stoops and picks up the hammer, one of the many tools they had dropped in figuring they might have a need for,

"Where do I start hammering this damn thing,"

"Hold on, lets wipe away the centuries of mud and look for openings, from what I've seen on previous capsules there's normally a door of some kind it could either just open or it might have a lock, but first we'll clean it up and look, might save us time and energy," Grit knows from past experiences growing up with his best pal and also having worked with him so closely for these past few years that his best mate was a bit ham fisted, clumsy and not too subtle, bit of a Bull in a china shop, it was a saying everyone used but which no one fully understood but on this occasion was a bang on description.

The exposed top three quarters of the capsule wiped clean of the mud revealed it's white and silver painted surface,

"Looks like it could have been part of an automobile, the paintwork and material I mean," Dreg observes,

"Yep your not wrong, not quite sure what the writing on the side says, I know those letters spell London which was the name of the humans largest city and that word is Warning, I think we need to hold on a while, do you remember that guy who thought he'd found a time capsule but it turned out to be a bomb, after the smoke had cleared him along with half of his field was gone, don't wanna go that way do we?"

"Bloody right we don't, I can run quicker than you I'll get that book from the kitchen which explains human words,"

"Nice one Dreg, I'll hold on till you get back even though the suspense is killing me,"

"Ok, be back in ten minutes, just don't be tempted to poke around with it huh,"

"No way."

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"Excellent bring it down and we'll see what these words are and please luck let it be a time capsule full of treasures to make us rich."

PROPERTY OF CRESSEX SCIENCE FOUNDATION AND LONDON ACADEMY OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH the first line read,

"That doesn't need any looking up, Cressex the place where we live and school is a place where children are sent to learn the basics of life to prepare them for the coming fight for survival," Grit informs Dreg.

A TIME CAPSULE FROM THE SCIENTISTS SEALED AND BURIED IN THE YEAR 2031, the second line read,

"Yes it is a time capsule and that's the year in human history that it was buried," Grit read to Dreg.

DANGER CONTAINER UNSTABLE DO NOT STAND UPRIGHT  
AVOID EXPOSURE TO STRONG ELECTRICAL, MAGNETIC FIELDS

after looking up the words he didn't understand and know the meaning of Grit announced to Dreg,

"The capsule might fall over if it was stood on one of it's ends, that means were good to open it up and look it has a door no need to do any hammering today old friend,"

"Good I don't think I have the energy, running backwards and forwards to the house has really exhausted me, think I got enough energy left to open it, look inside and then get off home for an early night,"

"Goes for me too."

A short sharp hiss sound reverberated around the hole as the door was opened making an excited Dreg exclaim,

"Wow! there's lots of stuff in here,"

"Isn't there just," Grit replied all wide eyed and excited,

"Tell you what Dreg I'll pass the stuff up to you and you put it in the wheelbarrow then we can get it back home and lock it up, don't want anyone getting hold of our treasure, especially Hogs,"

"Good idea Grit."

The last item was a folder containing photographs Grit could see through the clear plastic,

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Stepping out of the shower and wrapping himself in a light blue towel Grit looked at his five foot ten inch reflection in the mirror and whistled approval at his wet appearance, yellow feathers sticking out all over the place some at crazy angles,

"Bloody shampoo frizzles everything," said the fluff ball, but his short, stubby bill the barometer of an active Ducks well being was straight and firm,

"Always a good sign," he mumbled to himself satisfied that in his mind at least he was a fine looking example of his species.

The knock on the bathroom door brought him back to the here and now and unfortunately normality.

"Grit, you ok?"

"Yeah I'm fine, nearly finished be out in a moment,"

"Great I'm busting for a leak, have you had a look at that stuff we brought home last night?"

"No, I came straight in here, believe it or not I'd forgotten about that, best get my little yellow fluffy ass into some clothes and get busy with the detective work."

"Cool, just don't start without me,"

"No way brother, were 50 / 50 on this,"

Both standing silently looking at the two trails of mud the wheels from the barrow had left on the terracotta kitchen floor tiles, then looking at each other burst into laughter,

"We can clear that up later, are the doors locked, I'm getting paranoid about those bloody Hogs, this is a one in a million opportunity to change our lives and I don't want them to blow it for us,"

"I'll go and check."

"As watertight as an Otter's ass," Dreg announces as he walks back into the room which made Grit smile,

"Right then what have we got ourselves!"

"Humans were funny looking things, same size as us but those faces, not ugly..."

"....Not beautiful either," Grit finished off the comment for Dreg,

"So lets take stock of what we got, photographs, I recognise this it's a radio," said Grit holding up the small appliance,

How do you know that?

"Saw one just like it at the museum," Dreg said, "I don't know, haven't you ever been in there, guy it's brilliant, the way it works, I remember the folks taking me down there when I was a kid, they got a fierce air conditioning"

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"To escape the heat when I'm shopping in the town I go into that cinema on Brooks Road,"

"Not that porno cinema, man that's sick,"

"Don't go to watch the porn, just to cool down, seen one feathery ass you seen them all," Dreg informs his best mate.

"Well getting back to the task in hand sounds like I'm referring to the porn cinema again," Grit laughed then added,

"Do they provide tissues or do you have to take your own," now he was laughing loudly his shoulders making rapid up and down movements his bill quivering,"

"I don't do that kind of thing, wish I hadn't mentioned the place now."

Hey up! haven't seen these things before and there's several of them," says Dreg, holding up a small thin oblong shaped object with a funny shaped metal end,

"Nor have I, what else is in there that we don't know about?" says Grit taking hold of the object and studying it closely as he turned it this way and that hoping the answer of what it is and does would leap out at him.

After spending a couple of hours searching through the items from the time capsule such was the level of concentration it was a sudden thought by Dreg that they had both gone without food or a hot drink, when this was realised it was decided to call a halt and have an early lunch and a mug of Tea.

"I think I'm familiar with most of the stuff except those strange shaped things, how about we take the rest of the day off and wander down to the museum in town and see if they got any of these, to be honest Dreg there's nothing out of the ordinary here so we can give it to the museum as a donation, should give us a bit of publicity, maybe impress a few people,"

"Like the females in the barn perhaps?"

"Good afternoon I am Wad and I will be your guide, don't hesitate to ask questions, I will try to answer as best I can, please follow me to the first of the exhibits," a close look at the guide revealed he was middle aged, a couple of inches shorter than Grit, quite a stocky build and judging by the razor sharp creases in his immaculate uniform, very proud of his job, married or maybe just wearing a dress ring on the finger of his left hand, he chuckled to himself as he thought you don't have to be married to wear a ring on that finger, it's not a law, you won't be

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The strangest thing about the history of the Lings was that their ancestors had just suddenly appeared on the scene with a thorough knowledge of human technology, Lings were the equal of humans and in the intervening years between then and now had built on the science and advanced much of it, Links were in space, had travelled to all the planets and many of the moons, were very close to achieving propulsion to that of 10% the speed of light making the closest stars within the reach of one Links lifetime, there's was a very sophisticated technological world populated by a species that lived within it's means on the pollution front, fossil fuels were a thing of the past once nuclear fusion became a dream realised, the population of the world could now be estimated at around one and a half million with a figure of half of that for the Hog population, a strange sometimes aggressive people who rarely strayed from their lands but when they did it usually resulted in trouble as they practised a real talent they were proud of, namely taking other peoples possessions, or thieving as the humans had called it. In the room the humans had called a study was a TV, hi fi and computer with minimal furniture and sparsely decorated, the rooms purpose it appeared was to promote a peace and quiet so as to indulge in entertainment that brought pleasure to a person who after a days work in one of those terrible soulless pollution creating hell hole factories the unfortunate souls had to endure to be able to live, Wad had explained most graphically, but Grit was not listening he had spotted something on the back of the computer that had aroused his curiosity, the thing safely tucked away in his front trouser pocket, the metallic end on it looks similar in shape and size to that slot he had come to realise.

"Although we have no use for televisions in this day and age we do have many, many discs containing programmes and films that the humans used to sit and watch, this gadget is a remote control you can turn it off and on with this, even change channels, I will leave it with you, sit and watch the TV for a while," he smiled warmly,

"Thank you," Grit replied as he took hold of the controller,

"Yes thank you, this is certainly a fascinating place," Dreg said as he gave Wad his most sincere smile,

"Your most welcome lads, enjoy yourselves."

After he had left them alone, Grit leaned over to his friend and whispered,

"Come back to that enormous computer, it looks like there's a lot more things that might fit into, we'll leave it a few moments, then we'll go back to the TV, and then try it."

"Sounds good to me Grit, in the meantime, I'll go and look for the TV, I heard someone talking about this human once, I remember seeing him in the city, I'll go and look for him, there he is, now let's see, don't change seat on either end of the chocolate coloured leather sofa they waited patiently for the programme to begin."

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"This human called Benny Hill is very funny, I like the way he uses just visuals to make his entertainment so amusing, he is good," Grit exclaims between his hoots of laughter, Dreg proud with his choice agrees.

The Benny Hill Show on TV had just finished when Grit stands fumbles in his trouser pocket and pulls out the oblong shaped piece of plastic, then stands over the computer and with ease slots it into the rear, at the same instant the computer comes to life Wad enters the room,

"What are you two up to," he forcibly asks,

"Sorry we did not wish to cause trouble of any kind, we found a buried time capsule on our farm and inside it was some of these things," Grit quickly explained,

"Let me see, I do not want damage done to any of the exhibits," he said leaning over the front of the screen, the bulge on the back of his trousers showing he was still one of the ones still having a small but pronounced tail,

"It's what the humans called a flash drive or memory stick, they used them to store anything from photos to music to documents, bit primitive I know but you must remember these were the early days of the digital revolution I tell my students, do you have any idea what is on it?"

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